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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON LEBANON

Editorial Commentary

-- "Say something good or shut up"

Columnist Oraib Rantawi writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (07/25): "Why do some of us insist on being more American than the neo-conservatives and even more Israeli than Kadima? What alternatives, regimes and policies are these people defending? Was the peace process before July 12 moving ahead gracefully only to be halted by Hizbollah's operation? Were Arab diplomacies about to secure the release of more than ten thousand Palestinian and Arab prisoners and were thwarted by the capture of the three Israeli soldiers? Were Arab diplomacies about to liberate Rafah crossing and stop the free death that claimed the lives of nine Palestinians? What are these people fighting for so ferociously? Is the economic and social development that is achieving amazing numbers and placing us in the ranks of 'Asia's tigers'? Is the Voltairian freedoms and the Anglo-Saxon democracies that we are living by in our Arab capitals? We understand that some have reservations against Hizbollah and Hamas and have their own alternative ideologies. We do have such reservations and we desire living in western-style civility and secularism. We understand that some have strong criticisms for Hizbollah and Hamas' adventures.... But we do not understand that some have poured out their anger on Hizbollah and Hamas in a language that rivals even that of the Israeli defense army.... Gentlemen, say something good or else shut up. We have enough of Olmert's spokespeople's analyses, accusations and quotes."

-- "The croak of crows"

Columnist Basem Sakijha writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (07/25): "The time is not right for moody analyses designed as fillers in between news items on satellite channels. The final say now is for the war. These analysts must beg our pardon and keep quiet if their words stem from fear and if they are not able to understand that there is an Arab party that is capable of breaking Israel's arrogance and that there are those in the nation who are ready to stand up for its dignity and pay for it with their lives."

-- "Jordan's stand vis-`-vis the American plan for the region"

Columnist Bater Wardam writes on the inside page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (07/25): "The main question is what is to be done in the face of this American-Israeli destructive machine? What is the Arab world to do and what is Jordan, a country

in the middle of the storm, to do? Many commentators and politicians argue that Jordan's friendship with the United States and the peace treaty with Israel do not always guarantee stability and security because the neo-conservatives do not respect these agreements. Sensible, logical and justifiable, but the problem is that these same people call on Jordan to cancel the peace treaty with Israel and start new alliances. Let us be frank. If Jordan's interest lies in the cancellation of the treaty, then we would all be calling for it. But can canceling the treaty without having a 'national response plan' regarding the pressures that are expected to pile up on us considered the most sensible and responsible thing to do for Jordan and its people? I do not want to seem defeatist, but I care for Jordan. I know very well that Jordan's interests and strategic depth lies in the Arab world, but in order to depend on the Arab world, the Arab world must depend on itself.... We must protect Jordan and safeguard the accomplishments that we have made over the past decades.... We know that the one stand that leads to popularity and applause is the one that calls for canceling the treaty. But there are moments when we have to be honest and say that Jordan alone, just like Lebanon alone and Iraq alone, cannot pay the cost of heroism and national and religious zeal. When the Arab countries decide they are ready for the sacrifice, we will be the first to respond. But, I swear, we will not allow that Jordan be thrown into the fire so that some people can applaud, because our duty is to protect our accomplishments, and we cannot afford to exercise international political heroism."

-- "All there is to it"

Centrist, elite English daily Jordan Times (07/25) editorializes:
"To the average Arab, Rice's trip to Lebanon yesterday was an insult. Whatever the rhetoric and propaganda, regardless of the official declarations or handshakes of the day, all that Arabs see - and all there is to see - is that the United States is politically,

economically and militarily supporting a nuclear power that is yet again making a mockery of international legitimacy by using excessive force, invading lands, targeting civilians and exercising collective punishment."

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